From:	R F
To:	City Council
Subject:	BDS Vote
Date:	Monday, April 16, 2018 12:15:10 AM

Dear City Council Members,

I am a resident of North Cambridge and was surprised to hear that City Council is engaging in a vote that reflects the BDS movement's attempts to demonize and unfairly single out Israel as the basis for severing ties with a company that is doing legitimate business. As someone who is concerned about our city and its public image, this resolution will have implications beyond Hewlett-Packard and, if adopted, I believe it would tarnish our reputation.

I remember when a few years ago the BDS movement pressured divestment from SodaStream, an Israeli company whose factory was located in the West Bank. At the time, SodaStream employed a nearly equal number of both Palestinian and Israeli workers, treating them equally and with fair compensation. The result of divestment was the company being forced to move to a less disputed location in Israel. This was a company that was trying to do its part to unite rather than divide the people, and to create an economy where it was most needed. The resulting move actually hurt the hundreds of Palestinian workers, who were now too far a distance to keep their jobs - the very people the BDS movement professes to champion were hurt. It was a lose-lose situation and one that missed the whole point. And the BDS movement continued to hammer at SodaStream even after it acquiesced to leaving the West Bank - revealing that the true intention of the movement was not as much protecting Palestinians as being anti-Israel.

Singling out Israel and HP, amongst all the nations, companies, and conflicts in the world, and holding them to a unique ethical standard raises troubling issues about the Cambridge City Council. Thousands of American companies that are working overseas and engaged in transactions that can be tied to questionable human rights practices; including numerous companies with Cambridge contacts.

It would be one thing if the Cambridge City Council elected to adopt a foreign policy that it applied without prejudice to nations and companies around the world, or at least took the time for fair and public hearing, inviting experts and interested parties to weigh in openly before action is taken. However, in this instance, the Council is overlooking scores of other situations and electing to support dubious and largely unexamined claims against Israel made by an outside organization.

I think the BDS movement is detrimental to achieving peace and has no place in Cambridge. Peace and statehood is a worthy goal, but it cannot be realized by extreme and deceptive claims that overlook the hard reality on the ground. I have friends working in joint Israeli-Palestinian organizations to create a better and more peaceful future - this is where we should put our support. Boycotts, like the one under consideration, undermine these peacemakers, fuel polarization, and strengthen the hands of those who reject co-existence.

I respectfully oppose this resolution.

Thank you,

Reena Freedman
42 Haskell Street